This treaty literally was ''made in America,'' and it also is right for America. I urge every Member of the Senate to support the Chemical Weapons Convention when it comes to a vote next week.

Teleconference Remarks on the Opening of the Newseum
April 18, 1997

The President. Thank you, Al and Charles and Peter. Thanks a lot for asking me an easy question that can only get me in trouble. Whatever I say, I'll be behind the curve ball, which is, of course, where all of you try to keep me. [*Laughter*] Nonetheless, I'm glad to be with you today. And I am glad the Vice President was able to officially open the Newseum, and I'm glad he told you the stories that I hear about once a week about his days as a reporter. [*Laughter*] He says he was always accurate, vigorous, and totally fair. [*Laughter*]

Thanks to the technological wizardry that you've built into this wonderful Newseum, I'm able to join you on your video news wall for the grand opening. It's amazing to me that this is happening. You know, when I was growing up, I got my news from my local paper or watching the 6 o'clock news on my family's black and white TV, and I suppose I never imagined the incredible array of ways people would someday get their news and their information, from all-news radio and TV to the Internet and all the sort of ''near-news'' programs.

And I think that's why this Newseum is so important, because it will remind us that we've come a long way, but no matter how it's packaged or delivered, news has always fulfilled mankind's most basic need to know. And it also reminds us that democracy's survival depends upon that need to know and the free flow of ideas and information.

I congratulate you on giving our children and their parents an opportunity to learn about the role news media has in protecting our freedoms and helping us to build the most robust and open society in human history.

This Newseum is not only a tribute to the news profession, it's also a tribute to the men and women who have dedicated their lives to it, who know that, always, there are going to be people who will work hard to struggle, sometimes at real personal risks to themselves, to get the news and hopefully to be fair, honest, and critical in their reporting of it. America is stronger and freer because of them, and I thank them. This Newseum is really a great addition to the Washington area. And I know it will attract a lot of visitors, not only from every State but also from all around the world.

Now, the question you asked me is a fair one and a good one. I think that the fundamental role of the news media and the reporting today is what it has always been—is to give people information in a fair and accurate way. But the context is far different. There are, first of all, more sources of news. There is more information that people have to process, and people get their news in more different ways. And as I said, there are all these sort of ''near-news'' forces bearing down on you and offering competition.

I sometimes wonder what it's like to put together an evening news program or a morning newspaper when the main story has been playing every 5 minutes on CNN for 6 hours, and whether you really—whether that affects what you do or not. I would say that from my perspective, the most important thing is that while we're being inundated with this glut of information, that we try to make sure that people have a proper context within which to understand the information. I think that the fact that we can have more facts than ever before is important, but if you don't have any framework within which to understand those facts, it seems to me it poses an enormous challenge.

The other thing that I think we have to do is to be careful when we report the stories about things that might be true, not to say that they are, particularly if to say that they are or to imply that they are could cause real damage to people in their reputations and, indeed, in their own lives.

But I think that the competition to which you're subject makes it more difficult both to

keep down excessive hype in some stories and to take the time and the effort to put it in proper context. I think in some ways it is much more difficult to be a member of the news media than in years past. It's a great challenge. And all the benefits of this communications explosion impose new challenges on you to meet the old-fashioned duty of being accurate, thorough, tough, and fair.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—once you're off your crutches, you and your family will come over and browse through the Newseum with us. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. I'd love to do it. Thank you, and bless you all. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 11:24 a.m. from the Roosevelt Room at the White House to the Newseum in Arlington, VA. In his remarks, he referred to Allen H. Neuharth, chairman, and Peter S. Prichard, executive director, Newseum; and Charles Overby, chief executive officer, Freedom Forum.

Remarks at the Award Ceremony for the National Teacher of the Year
April 18, 1997

Thank you very much to our Teacher of the Year and all the teachers of the year and their friends and supporters and family members who are here. Senator Glenn, Congressman Chabot, Secretary Riley, and Vice President Gore, thank you for being such wonderful partners to me.

Next year, Dick Riley and I will have been working together for 20 years in one way or another, and we're about to get the hang of it. [*Laughter*] And I really think he's done a wonderful job as our Secretary of Education.

I want to tell you, this NetDay idea that the Vice President developed—we were just sitting around talking one day, and I was bemoaning the fact that he was doing some elaborate thing on his computer screen in his office and I still can hardly figure out how to turn mine on. [*Laughter*] And we were all laughing about how our children were leapfrogging us in their capacity to deal with computers and one thing led to another and before you know it, we have a goal that we'll hook up every library and classroom in the country by the year 2000, and then there's going to be a NetDay and, all of a sudden, one day we hook up 20 percent of the classrooms in California. And I never met anybody that was any better at taking an idea and turning it into reality than Al Gore. And this NetDay thing, it's going to revolutionize education in this country, because we're not going to stop until we bring the benefits of technology to every single child in this country, and I think it's a wonderful thing.

I could have done without Secretary Riley telling that story that my—[*laughter*]—my second grade teacher did. But I was sitting here—I have no notes on this, so if I mess it up you'll have to forgive me, but the truth is that Sister Mary Amata McGee, whom I found after over 30 years of having no contact with her—she was my second and third grade teacher. I found her in Springfield, Missouri, one night when I came there near the end of the 1992 campaign. I had no idea what had become of her. I didn't know what had happened. So I reestablished my relationship with her. But she was a little too generous. The truth is, I think she gave me a D in conduct—[*laughter*]—and I think she gave me a D not because I raised my hand but because I spoke whether I was called on or not. [*Laughter*]

But if ever you wonder whether what you do matters, after Sister Mary Amata McGee in the second and third grade, there was Louise Vaughn, Mary Christianus, Kathleen Scher, my sixth grade teacher, who was my steady pen pal until she died just a few days before she became 90 years old, when I was Governor. And then in the seventh grade, my homeroom teacher was Ruth Atkins. And then there was Miss Teague, my civics teacher in the eighth grade. And Mary Broussard, my ninth grade English teacher, who was the only person in our class besides me that supported John Kennedy over Richard Nixon. [*Laughter*] In the ninth grade!